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ADVICE to the FAIR:

AN

Epiſtolary ESSAY,

IN

THREE PARTS:

ON

DRESS, CONVERSE, and MARRIAGE:

ADDRESS'D TO A

SISTER.

Servare modum, Naturam ſequi, finemque tueri. LUC.

LONDON:

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ADVICE to the FAIR:

A N

Epilogue ESSAY,

I N

PROSE and VERSE:

BRITISH MUSEUM 10 54 NOV

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A

SERMON

ON

TEXT.

ADVICE to the FAIR.

PART I.

On DRESS.

TO Thee! lov'd Maid, with whom I joy to ſhare
A Mother's Fondneſs, and a Father's Care;
While Spring returning fires the Soul to Song,
To Thee, the Bard, and all his Lays belong:
But what have I of Knowledge, or of Art,
To pleaſe thy Fancy, and improve thy Heart?
Glean'd from the Faults, and Follies which abound,
The Weeds, which ſpring on Life's neglected Ground;
A few looſe Hints, my little All appears:
For Wiſdom mocks a Chace of twenty Years.

Yet

Yet theſe, perhaps, like ſome few Footſteps found,
May point the Path ſhe treads on mortal Ground:
And what (tho' little) is with Labour mine,
At once, *Belinda*, ſhall in this be thine.
Hark then attentive to th' Advice I bring,
Obſervance dictates what the Bard ſhall ſing.

VAIN are the Maxims rigid Gownmen give;
Who learns from Life, can only teach to live:
Not ſilent Books, in dull Retreats, can ſhow
Whence ſocial Virtues, ſocial Pleaſures flow;
And vain their Science, who, with Monkiſh Pride,
The Joys of Senſe from reas'ning Man divide:
What Heav'n approv'd as good, who ſlight as vain,
And teach, that Virtue but exiſts in Pain.
Life was for Pleaſure, and for Uſe deſign'd,
Accurs'd the Tongue which bids to ſhun Mankind,
With artful Guile t' allure the Young and Gay
To dreary Cells, whence Thought alone can ſtray.
There Time a ſolitary Circle goes,
Youth lends no Joy, no Honours Age beſtows;
(Honour from Virtue, That from Action ſprings,
And flies from Hermits, as ſhe flies from Kings.)
There glows in vain, the Bloom of vernal Days,
And Life's Meridian waſtes her ſtronger Rays:

Next the dry Soil defrauded Autumn chides,
Nor Fruit, nor Flow'r, the Shade of Winter hides.----
Of theſe no more---- the Muſe to Joy aſpires,
And bids the Boſom glow with gen'rous Fires:
I feel a Thirſt for more exalted Fame,
And pant for Truth, to conſecrate my Name.
Ne'er let me then fantaſtic Zeal purſue,
Leave guarding Reaſon, Nature's guiding Clue;
For Angel Forms affrighting Masks deviſe,
Or blooming Virtue in a Cowl diſguiſe.

'TILL the free Soul ſhall prove her Pow'r's Extent,
And Earth, in Kindneſs, claim the Duſt ſhe lent;
That meaner Half may well thy Care employ,
And claims, by Right divine, its Share of Joy.
For this Almighty Wiſdom ſtretch'd her Wing,
And half the Wonders of Creation ſpring:
Ev'n now, relenting, She ſuſpends the Rod,
And Nature brightens at the Smile of God;
Shakes off its Curſe, and opens to the Sight
Gay Beauty's Scenes, and Paths of ſoft Delight:
Still Flow'rs unnumber'd o'er the verdent Bed
Refracted Light, in nameleſs Beauties, ſpread:
Hence ſpicy Zephyrs ſweep the Plain beneath,
And Health and Pleaſure, wove with Fragrance, breathe.

Still mounts the Lark, extending, as ſhe flies,
A Train of Harmony, from Earth to Skies:
Still ſwells the Vine, with Bleſſings leſs confin'd,
Bleſſings, which reach the Deaf, the Dumb, the Blind.
Theſe taſte, --- the while let Praiſe thy Soul employ,
And call Religion from the Womb of Joy:
To ſlight Heav'n's Gifts, can ne'er its Favour move,
But pleas'd Acceptance, and a grateful Love.

A Rule, I know, has long been counted wiſe:
" The Praiſe, the Love, which Folly gives, deſpiſe,
" Pleaſe but the Wiſe, the deep diſcerning Few,
" Their Praiſe is Praiſe, the Pleaſure thence is true."
But what muſt thoſe, to whom the Fates deny
The Power to charm, in Wiſdom's piercing Eye?
Muſt they be dull, aſpiring to be grave,
And ſtrive to ſnatch, what Fortune never gave?
Like good *Formalia*, once the wild and gay,
Scorn Nature's Dictates, and forſake her Way;
Dreſs up that Folly, once in Mirth unſeen,
In *Priſca*'s Garb, and *Muſa*'s thoughtful Mien;
Diſdaining *Faſhion*'s wild, fantaſtic Reign,
Give the Gay, Laughter, and the Tender, Pain?

Ev'n *Folly*'s ſelf, her Bells around, may pleaſe;
She moves not ſtately, yet ſhe moves with Eaſe:

But

But, on her Head, if ſome gay Pow'r ſhould place
The nodding Plumes, which *Jove*'s great Daughter grace,
The Spear, the Shield, which *Pallas* holds ſo high,
Should theſe bright Arms, her dangling Hands ſupply;
In Spite of Pity, and of Kindred too,
No Fop in *Europe* but wou'd laugh like you;
Then, ſtruck with Horror, ſmite his Breaſt, and ſwear,
The luckleſs Thing had loſt its ev'ry Air.

SHALL then the Wife this boaſted Rule embrace,
And ſcorn the Favour of the weaker Race?
If independent, and alone they ſtood,
Or ſhone remote in ſome ſequeſter'd Wood;
Then might they glory in their mental Store,
And ſcorn to ſtoop to Vanity for more.

BUT with the Vain, alas! we've much to do,
And much to them from kind Good-nature's due;
Ev'n their Eſteem, how light ſoe'er to gain,
Is worth ſome Thought, ſome Time, ſome Care, ſome Pain.

LET then thy *Dreſs* be ſplendid as thy Soul,
And Silk the Crouds, too ſtrong for Senſe, controul:
'Tis this thy Wit at Court ſhall recommend;
For there, a Trifle is the ſame as Friend.

Thus

Thus introduc'd, who ſees thy Senſe, ſhall love;
Who ſees it not, ſhall yet thy Taſte approve.
Nor Fools alone are thus the Prize of Art,
Oft Show with Senſe will ſhare the youthful Heart:
When this ſhall vaniſh, that ſhall ſtill remain,
Confirm thy Conqueſt, and ſecure thy Reign.

THO' the gay Science ſink beneath Mankind,
'Tis oft an Error of a radiant Mind;
But for themſelves the Gewgaws never prize,
Which Guilt firſt ask'd, and which a Worm ſupplies:
Tho' while they win, from ſhining Crouds, Applauſe,
We juſtly uſe 'em in our Country's Cauſe;
And gen'rous Minds, who moſt delight to pleaſe,
Will joy to charm with ſuch a wond'rous Eaſe:
Yet let thy Air pronounce a juſt Diſdain
On all the Splendor of thy ſweeping Train;
Which ever ſhines the Maſter-Charm of *Dreſs*,
Yet thoſe alone who ſlight it can poſſeſs.

ADVICE to the FAIR.

PART II.

On CONVERSE.

TO Think, *Belinda*, is a Gift which Heav'n,
For private Joy, to favour'd Man has giv'n.
Thoſe Thoughts, in ſuited Language, to expreſs,
Was giv'n, thy Friend with ſocial Joy to bleſs.
Then, that thy *Converſe* may be ſure to pleaſe,
Adorn thy Words with Negligence, and Eaſe:
Nor lead the gay Diſcourſe, nor ſilent ſit,
Watchful to ſhew thy Judgment, or thy Wit:
Say ſomething more; for Wit was never known
Unintroduc'd to flow, or flow alone:

Led on by Trifles, in her Turn ſhe'll play,
As Tides our Treaſures, as they roll, convey.

More than Thou art, ne'er covet to be thought;
No ſtudied Phraſe, with anxious Care, be ſought;
Speak thy own Thoughts, in thy own Language too,
Nor fear the piddling Critic's ſour Review:
Ten Slips, the Smoothneſs from the Wiſe may ſcreen;
One Heſitation by the Fool is ſeen.

A Modest Confidence thro' all maintain,
Not over anxious wide Applauſe to gain:
If one Superior ſhould arraign thy Wit,
With Patience hear, and with a Smile ſubmit:
If ſome conceited, forward, chit-chat Thing
Should Words of thine in pert Contention bring,
Leave him to Folly ---- She, the Foil of Senſe,
Shall all its Charms, in brighter Beams, diſpenſe:
Nor for thy Wit alone ſuch Love betray,
To plead her Cauſe, and guard her in the Fray:
But if the Subject claims thy warm Regard,
Let home-ſtruck Senſe the limping Jeſt retard.

Think who thy Company, and thence behave
With ſuited Mixture of the Light, and Grave.
With gay *Florella* dance, and ſmile, and ſing,
Nor Study's Brow to Mirth's Aſſembly bring.

When

When with *Prudella*, light up all thy Rays,
Let Senſe extort, from aping Dullneſs, Praiſe;
Shine out thyſelf, and ſmile ſerenely free,
And ſhew the Mimick, what ſhe fain would be.

THERE are ſome few ſo delicate of Thought,
They feel what paſſes with the Croud for Nought;
Within whoſe finiſh'd Breaſt ev'n Trifles move,
Some tender Spring of Pain, Joy, Hate or Love;
Who bend to either, in a juſt Degree,
As either Object more or leſs may be:
Theſe few alone, to Heights of Pleaſure ſoar;
Theſe few alone, the Depths of Woe explore.

As the nice Scales, which, juſtly pois'd in Air,
Shew Gravitation perfect in a Hair,
Preſs'd with an Ounce, are thrown to each Extreme,
This ſwift deſcends, that, mounting, kicks the Beam.

BUT Numbers, emulous of this Exceſs,
Paſſions unfelt, in all their Heights, expreſs;
Extremes of Joy or Woe they look, and ſpeak,
When the Soul's eaſy, and the Pulſe is weak;
With Ardour preſs a momentary Friend,
Scarce lives th' Appearance, when th' Embraces end;
Melt without Grief at ev'ry Tale of Woe,
And meanleſs Tears in copious Torrents flow.

AND

And hence the Wife, where'er Exceſs is found,
Conclude the Root but juſt beneath the Ground;
A Weed, which ſpreads, and withers in an Hour,
The worthleſs Product of a wanton Pow'r:
And ev'n the Fool who, while it lives, admires;
Sees his Miſtake the Moment it expires.

Then guard thy Heart, nor let the World ſurvey
Each fading Paſſion in its Length of Sway:
Men are but Men, nor ev'n are Women more,
Tho' female Beauty bids the Men adore:
Virtues and Graces do not always ſhine,
With the ſame Image of the Pow'r Divine.
Check then the Tide, when Friendſhip longs to flow
In thoſe high Tranſports we but ſeldom know;
Leſt, when the Stream ſhall ebb (as ebb it muſt)
Thy Friend the Faith of all thy Vows miſtruſt:
He ſees but Acts, and, tho' the Sourſe remain,
'Tis thou alone can'ſt know his Fears are vain.

Warm be thy Heart, as Fondneſs can deſire,
Indulge the Joy, and glow with Seraph's Fire:
Yet, as we find thoſe Flames decline ſo faſt,
Hide, if thou can'ſt, what cannot always laſt:

The Days now haſte, when ev'ry Thought ſhall prove
The vaſt Extent of Friendſhip, and of Love;
When Theſe no more, by Turns, ſhall ebb and flow,
But each be boundleſs, and for ever ſo:
Truſt thou, till then, for this immortal Boon,
Nor loſe Earth's Joys by graſping Heav'n's too ſoon.

But few can fix the Bounds of Paſſion's Sway,
Point to the Breaſt, and there command its Stay:
Judge kindly then, where'er thine Eye ſhall find
The wild Exceſſes of a gen'rous Mind:
Still view the varying Conduct in the Whole,
And draw from thence thy Judgment of the Soul.

But O! to judge, with Certainty, of Man,
From Words, and Acts, to form a perfect Plan,
Who boaſts an equal Art? Whoſe piercing Eye,
Thro' modern Manners, can the Soul deſcry?
Here Mortal Science droops her laurell'd Creſt;
Struck dumb with Shame, Confuſion ſwells her Breaſt:
From all her airy Flights, in Worlds unknown,
She falls to bluſh for ever in her own:
Darkly to gueſs is all frail Man can do
When hov'ring Miſts obſcure the Point in View.

ADVICE to the FAIR.

PART III.

On MARRIAGE.

AS Heav'n all-wiſe has fix'd our preſent State,
Joys, moſt our own, on others ever wait;
When therefore Rival Numbers ſue to twine
The Thread of Life, and all ſhe gives, with thine,
May ſome attendant Angel aid thy Choice,
And mark the Man for thy approving Voice.

YET let me, emulous thy Life to bleſs,
Point ſome few Hints to regulate thy Gueſs:
Catch the looſe Fragments from th' important Art,
And found with Care, with Rapture I'll impart.

FIRST,

FIRST, what we ſeek be fix'd; then, how to find,
Will prove the fit Enquiry of the Mind.
O! let no Threats, no kind Intreaties, move,
To give thy Perſon where thou can'ſt not love,
Be ſure to find in him you chuſe for Life,
E're he the Husband's made, and thou the Wife,
That myſtic Grace which blaſts the Caſuiſt's Fame,
Which no Deſcription fits, nor any Name;
That Something form'd to captivate thy Heart,
Whence the blind Archer ſhoots th'unerring Dart;
Let this be Beauty, Wit, or Senſe expreſs'd,
'Tis ſtill, perhaps, to none but thee confeſs'd:
To thee, it fills the Seat of ev'ry Grace,
Is all of Ornament in Mind and Face:
Nor is it worth thy meaneſt Thought to know,
If the World deems him thus indow'd, or no.
YET happier ſhe, whoſe deep diſcerning Eye,
Can the nice Beauties of the Mind deſcry,
Whom Wit can ſtrike, and noble Thoughts ingage;
A Love thus built defies th' Approach of Age:
A thouſand Charms to her conſpicuous play,
To others loſt, as to the ſightleſs Day.
BUT moſt the Suit of lifeleſs Wealth deſpiſe,
Nor give thy Youth, to Age a uſeleſs Prize;

No Gale ſo fatal as thy yielding Breath;
To Virtue, Danger, and to Pleaſure, Death.

THE ſhameleſs Dotard who, with wither'd Arms,
Like Froſt to Flow'rs, wou'd blaſt thy blooming Charms:
However honour'd, and however grave,
Muſt of Neceſſity be Fool, or Knave:
Fool, if he dreams, beneath the Hoar of Age,
His Love, can Youth to equal Love ingage;
Knave, if to Self he limits each Deſign,
And ſteals his Pleaſure at th' Expence of thine.

'TIS gen'rous Souls alone are born to prove
The ſoft Indearments of a perfect Love:
In others Joys their nobleſt Bleſſings live,
They feel, refin'd, the Pleaſures which they give.

THE juſt indur'd Embrace, the ſuffer'd Kiſs,
Is void of Virtue, as 'tis void of Bliſs.
When the fond Pair exchange their mutual Joys,
And each the other's tend'reſt Thoughts employs;
When *Delia*'s Raptures ſwell her *Damon*'s Breaſt,
And in her Eyes his Pleaſure Beams confeſt;
Then o'er their Couch the Virtues ſtretch their Wings,
There Pleaſure reigns, and Love for ever ſprings.

YET not alone let hood-wink'd Paſſion ſway,
Nor barter Peace, for Raptures of a Day;

In whom thou lov'ſt, e're yet he's ever thine,
Let kind Good-nature, fond Affection join.
FIRST, mark his Temper with thy keeneſt View,
In Trifles moſt, for theſe ſhall tell thee true;
Theſe unreview'd eſcape, and deeply bear
The Father's Image, or deform'd, or fair.
TRACE his Behavior, with thy utmoſt Skill,
To Man and Beaſt, obedient to his Will:
What if, to thee, his Words all Sweetneſs flow?
Or, if thy Squirrel dies, he melts in Woe?
Theſe are but Tricks, which Art the Churl can teach;
Much moves the Tongue, which ne'er the Heart can reach.
In abject Cringes, if he bows the Knee,
And ſhews extream Submiſſion e'en to thee;
Well may'ſt thou fear that honeſt *Tom*, and *Tray*,
With Anguiſh ſigh, and curſe his haughty Sway.
If ſo, the Thought how fatal, and how vain,
That ſtill to thee a Diff'rence he'll maintain,
When thou and thine are once within his Pow'r,
He'll ſmile and flatter, fawn and cringe no more:
His Senſe, his Wit, his Beauty will be loſt,
And Joy congeal'd in one eternal Froſt:
E'en Virtue's ſelf (if ſuch can virtuous be)
Will, unimparted, ſcarce extend to thee;

Should Honour, Duty, prompt him to be kind,
From theſe what awkard Goodneſs ſhould we find;
To that from Nature, which ſpontaneous ſprings,
Swells to all Heights, and reaches to all Things:
Nay ſhould he love, 'twould be in Hate's Diſguiſe,
And Storms which ſhipwreck Peace for ever riſe.

NEXT, if he loves employ thy Art to know;
Veil'd be thy Thoughts, and thy Conceſſions ſlow:
Yet ſpare with Doubts to wreck a gen'rous Mind,
Merely to ſhew thy Pow'r is unconfin'd.

IF, in his warmeſt Suit, he ſeems to rate
Thy Heart, before thy Beauty and Eſtate:
If, thro' his Conduct, when ſeverely view'd,
In thine his Pleaſure is alone purſued:
If, when with thee, his Eloquence ſubſide,
And Words half utter'd are with Sighs ſupply'd,
Safely believe, nor more his Vows miſtruſt;
Pure is his Paſſion, and his Views are juſt:
A Love like this, thro' Life's Extent will ſhine,
And, more than Virtue's ſelf, ſecure him thine.

YET O! may that, with more than mortal Rays,
Illume the Shade, which waits the End of Days:
To Virtue's Eye, that Gloom tranſparent ſhows,
And Death, from Horror, ſoftens to Repoſe:

Peace,

Peace, her Attendant, ſmooths the Path for Time:
He leads no Anguiſh, if he brings no Crime.

THEN ſhall your mutual Joy, unwearied, run
One bliſsful Round with each revolving Sun;
No ſudden Storm the op'ning Smiles ſhall blaſt,
Nor Pleaſures fade, at Thoughts they fly ſo faſt:
Tho' flitting Hours will Life's cold Winter bring,
Yet cloſe behind him ſmiles eternal Spring;
One Night between ---- one ſhort repoſing Night,
Whoſe Shades ſhall flit before immortal Light;
Aſcending then, with Wings untry'd before,
You'll ſeek the Skies, and ſcorn the humble Shore:
There feel the Bliſs, which none till felt can know,
And ſtill Eternity ſhall give and owe.

BUT here, ſhould Doubts thy tender Mind invade,
How Rules like theſe th' important Choice can aid;
When Love, to ev'ry Fault has clos'd thine Eyes,
And Reaſon all her Pow'r to Love denies.

HAST thou a Female Friend, in Danger, try'd?
A Boon like this has wond'rous Heaven ſupply'd?
When Love's firſt Shaft invades thy Virgin's Reſt,
Bequeath the Secret to her faithful Breaſt;
Yield to her Judgment, beg her to be free,
And ſhew the Faults which Love has hid from thee.

YET

YET ſtill with Caution this Advice purſue;
Friends are but mortal, many faithleſs too:
Love is not born (tho' dim) completely blind,
And *Reaſon* oft to Infant Love is kind:
Then, e're he's taught by Time, to ſcorn Controul,
Let thoſe Inquiries fix thy wav'ring Soul.

IF, after all your Care, you miſs the Prize,
That Care not fruitleſs ſhall in Pleaſure riſe:
Conſcious you ſtretch'd the Bounds of mortal Art,
A ſecret Joy ſhall oft relieve thy Heart:
The Gloom ſhall brighten; and thy Load be leſs,
And Heav'n All-wiſe, when fit, thy Wrongs redreſs.

BUT O! for thee, luxuriant Thought ſurveys
Long Scenes of Bliſs, and Tracts of brighter Days:
And ſhou'd this lay the Child of wanton Youth,
Point thee one Path of Pleaſure, or of Truth;
When Age ſhall ſilver all my Locks with Snow,
(Theſe painful Honours ſhould my Years beſtow)
Pleas'd I'll review it with my cloſing Eyes,
And Joy's laſt Bluſhes in my Cheeks ſhall riſe:
At parting, chear me with a warming Ray,
And gild the cloudleſs Evening of my Day.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM 10 NOV 54

BY F & T. AITKEN

Book 5.